

WORSHIP SERVICE - 2.26.2023

THE GOSPEL IN THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH - PART 4 - A CELEBRATION OF THE GOSPEL

I. INTRODUCTION

1 Timothy 1:12-20

I thank him who has given me strength, Christ Jesus our Lord, because he judged me faithful, appointing me to his service, **13** though formerly I was a blasphemer, persecutor, and insolent opponent. But I received mercy because I had acted ignorantly in unbelief, **14** and the grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. **15** The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost. **16** But I received mercy for this reason, that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display his perfect patience as an example to those who were to believe in him for eternal life. **17** To the King of the ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.

18 This charge I entrust to you, Timothy, my child, in accordance with the prophecies previously made about you, that by them you may wage the good warfare, **19** holding faith and a good conscience. By rejecting this, some have made shipwreck of their faith, **20** among whom are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have handed over to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme.

II. THE GLORIOUS GOSPEL OF GOD'S GRACE AND MERCY

- "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners."
- This is the message that Paul was entrusted with, the glorious gospel of the blessed God (1:11).
- This is the message that Paul charges Timothy with guarding and defending.
- This is the message for which Paul suffered much and labored much to bring to the Gentiles.

- V12-17 is an interruption in the instructions Paul was giving Timothy.
- V11 seems to be the prompt for him to recall, with deep amazement and gratitude, the overwhelming mercy and grace God has shown him.
- This mercy and grace transformed the Apostle from being an enemy of Christ, into a prototype for the kind of person I mentioned earlier.

THE GOSPEL IS FOR SINNERS

- Paul's gospel statement is the first of five of sayings that he calls "trustworthy" and sometimes he adds, "deserving of full acceptance." (1 Tim. 3:1; 4:9; 2 Tim. 2:11; Tit. 3:8)
- It's a statement that is to be universally accepted as true and truthful.
- It is for everyone to believe and accept as true.
- "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners."
- Do you believe that?

- **Christ Jesus**
- Who is Christ Jesus?
- He is the divine Son, the 2nd person of the Triune Godhead.
- All things were created through him and for him.
- He sustains everything by the word of his power.
- He is the head of His Church.
- And at his name, every knee will bow in heaven and earth and under the earth,
- And every tongue confess that He is Lord!
- That's who Christ Jesus is!

- **Came into the world.**
- This Christ Jesus, came into the world.

- The eternal Son wrapped himself in human flesh, adding to his divine nature, a human nature.
- Paul wrote in Philippians that Christ humbled himself by “taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.” (Phil. 2:6-8)
- John writes in his gospel, “The Word became flesh and dwelt among us.” (John 1:14)
- **To save sinners.**
- To what end? For what purpose did Christ come into the world?
- To save sinners!
- Who are the sinners? That’s every one of us!
- We have all transgressed God’s law, we have all fallen short of His glory. (Rom. 3:23)
- Every one of us is born an enemy of God. (Rom. 5:10)
- All of us are born dead in our trespasses and sins, all sons of disobedience (Eph. 2:1-2)
- That’s how God’s Word describes who we are.
- And the good news is that Christ came into the world to save sinners!
- Our Lord himself said, “The Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.” (Luke 19:10)
- Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners!
- The gospel message is not complicated.
- Jesus came to live the life we could not live, Jesus died the death we deserved to die, and Jesus rose from the dead in victory, conquering the enemies that we could not defeat, sin and death.
- Paul says that this saying is trustworthy! You can stake your life on it.
- Paul writes, “For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all.” (1 Tim. 2:5-6)
- Which sinners did he come to save?
- Paul writes in ch2 that it is God’s desires for all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. (1 Tim. 2:4)
- How do we get in on this gracious offer of the gospel and God’s grace?
- John 1:12-13 John says in his gospel, “But to all who did receive him, who believed in His name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but God.”
- One has to believe and receive Christ. That is, trust in Christ.
- Have you trusted Christ?
- Jesus said in John 6:40, For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.”
- Have you looked on the Son, trusted in him, and believed in Him?
- If so, you have eternal life through Him.

THE GOSPEL IS POWERFUL

- The gospel has the power to turn sinners into saints!
- This is why Paul takes a moment to give his resume and testimony in the midst of his outburst of thanksgiving.
- v13 he refers to his past behavior. He says he was a “blasphemer,” “persecutor,” and an “insolent opponent.”
- Paul was an enemy of Christ. He was a persecutor of the Church.
- Acts 26: 9-11 “I myself was convinced that I ought to do many things in opposing the name of Jesus of Nazareth. 10 And I did so in Jerusalem. I not only locked up many of the saints in prison after receiving authority from the chief priests, but when they were put to death I cast my vote against them. 11 And I punished them often in all the synagogues and tried to make them blaspheme, and in raging fury against them I persecuted them even to foreign cities.
- There was no one worse than Paul. The Christians were afraid of him.
- v13-14 But I received mercy because I had acted ignorantly in unbelief, 14 and the grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.
- *Who is beyond the reach of God to save? Absolutely no one!*
- Romans 1:16-17 For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. 17 For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, “The righteous shall live by faith.”
- How does he know this? He came face to face with the transforming power of God for salvation.
- He says the *“grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.”*
- Grace is the undeserved, unmerited favor of God towards sinful men.
- God’s grace produced faith and love in Paul’s life.
- Faith replaced his previous unbelief and love replaced his brutal hatred for those he now called his brothers and sisters in Christ.
- This faith and love can only be found in the person of Christ, they belong to Christ, and they are the visible expressions of a Christian living in divine fellowship and relationship with Christ.
- God’s grace and a recognition of what God has done for us should humble us.
- At the thought of what God rescued him from in his former life, Paul has a sudden sense of self-abasement, he calls himself the foremost

sinner.

- 1 Cor, 15:9 For I am the least of the apostles, unworthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.
- Eph. 3:8 To me, though I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ,
- Paul is so vividly aware of his own sin that he cannot conceive that anyone could possibly be worse than him.
- Do you feel the same way as Paul?
- Does it overwhelm you to think of the kindness, and mercy, and grace of God that came into your life?

- We must never forget what we were delivered from!
- John Bunyan, Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners, "*It is profitable for Christians to be often calling to mind the very beginnings of grace with their souls.*"
- "*Oh, the remembrance of my great sins, of my great temptations, and of my great fears of perishing forever! They bring afresh into my mind the remembrance of my great help, my great support from Heaven, and the great grace that God extended to such a wretch as I.*"
- We should reflect on what Christ saved us from and how God's grace came to our life.

- Paul discerns the reason for God's gracious dealing with him.
- V16 But I received mercy for this reason...
- That in Paul, Christ is displaying his perfect patience, so that Paul would serve as an example for future believers.
- God was patient, slow to anger, with someone like Paul, who persecuted the Church!
- What happened to Paul would be a rough outline, a stencil, of what will come to be the blessed experience of countless others who will receive mercy and grace to believe in Christ.
- Paul becomes the portrait of God turning the worst of the worst sinners into saints.

- No one is beyond the mercy of God.
- That's good news if you've ever thought that God can't save you.
- That's good news if you're praying for someone who is really hardened towards God.
- No matter who you are, what you've done, these words are trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance.
- Do you believe them?

THE GOSPEL LEADS TO GOD'S PRAISE

- It's easy to see why Paul is so grateful and why he burst forth with thanksgiving and praise in the middle of writing a letter to Timothy.
- Paul is filled with immense gratitude to God.
- V12 "I thank him..." Three reasons: "He has given me strength," "He judged me faithful," "appointing me to his service."
- In spite of what he was, God's mercy came to Paul.
- God's grace should overwhelm us to the point where we overflow with thanks and praise and worship.

- Paul's doxology was likely an early liturgical formulation borrowed from Judaism.
- v17 To the King of the ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.
- God is the supreme and eternal King.
- The King of the ages, He governs all the ages from creation until the end of time.
- He is immortal - immune from the ravages of decay and death.
- He is invisible - He is beyond the ability of human eyes to fully gaze upon his glory.
- He is the only God - He is unique. There is no one else like him.
- To Him be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen!

- How often do you reflect on God's grace and are overcome with thanksgiving and praise?

THE GOSPEL IS TO BE DEFENDED

- In light of God's gracious gospel, Paul charges Timothy to wage the good warfare, to fight the good fight.
- What is the good fight? It is the good fight of the faith (1 Tim. 6:12).
- Timothy cannot remain neutral in the face of those who would seek to deviate from and distort the true gospel.

- Paul appeals to two things in charging Timothy with this assignment.
- First, He reminds Timothy of their special father-son relationship.
- Second, he reminds him of the circumstances of his ordination.
- Prophecies were made about him.
- 1 Tim. 4:14 Do not neglect the gift you have, which was given you by prophecy when the council of elders laid their hands on you.
- It was by following whatever these prophecies were that Timothy would and could wage the good warfare.

- Remembering those two things and holding on to the faith and good conscience, Timothy could wage this good warfare.
- Faith and good conscience must be preserved together.

- Belief and behavior, conviction and conscience are closely linked.
- A genuine faith works itself out in the life of the believer to produce the good works of the faith.
- Paul tells Timothy in 4:16 to “keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching.”
- The false teachers who were perverting the gospel did neither of those two things.
- Paul names two who have rejected the faith and a good conscience thus shipwrecking their faith.
- Paul excommunicated them from the Church. They were put out of the realm of God’s care and protection and exposed to buffeting by the evil one.
- The objective was punitive with the goal of bringing the individuals to repentance and restoration to fellowship.
- This is a reminder to all of us that none of us are immune to the temptation to wander from the gospel.
- We are to wage the good warfare in every facet of our lives.
- We have a real spiritual enemy that wants to distract us and deviate us from the truth through deception and division.
- Keep the faith and a good conscience.
- The gospel is worth guarding and defending.
- And this glorious gospel, Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, is worth celebrating forever!
- Ephesians 2:4-7 But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— 6 and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7 so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

APPLICATION AND REFLECTION

In light of today's message....

- What did I learn about the gospel?
- How can I apply what I learned about the gospel to my life?
- With whom can I share the gospel this week?